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Hobart-History

HISTORY NEWS

No. 84, October 2001 *Hobart Historical Society, Inc.* *Hobart, Indiana*

Annual Dinner
Thursday, November 15, 2001

Bruce Woods, president of the Lake County Historical Society, will talk about Lake County history at the Hobart Historical Society's annual dinner, Thursday, November 15, at the Supervisors Club. There will be a cash bar at 6 p.m., dinner at 6:45, followed by a short business meeting and our program. The price is $15.00 per person.

Tickets are available at the Museum. Reservations may be made by calling the Museum at 942-0970.

At The Museum

School tours! Spring and fall see an influx at the Museum. All third grade students in Indiana study local history, and Hobart is no exception. In addition other grades may also visit. Last spring St. Bridget's fourth grade class toured the Museum and learned about Indiana history. For the most part, though, third grade classes dominate the school tours. Last spring Joan Martin and Liberty schools visited. In September and October, five Joan Martin classes and several classes from George Earle are also visiting. The students walk to town and sometimes do part of our Downtown Hobart walking tour and visit the Mayor's office and other sites as well as the Museum, then cap their day off with lunch at Dairy Queen or The Bright Spot.

School visits can be something of an endurance contest for our docents. As many as three classes may visit in rotation on a single day. Each class is divided into two groups with one touring the lower level, the other upstairs, then trading places for the second half of their time. Bruce Webber and Don Stewart share lecture duty downstairs. Both report they enjoy the experience and the willing ears for their stories, even after running through things six times in three hours. We don't try to lecture upstairs, but let the students roam the Museum. Rita McBride developed a "Museum Quiz" to use with the third grades, and the teachers have adopted it. This keeps the students busy, exploring the exhibits for answer clues to complete the quiz. We try to have two or three more docents circulating to help. School visit days are exhausting, but rewarding. The students have studied Hobart history before they come and are usually knowledgeable and enthusiastic about what they are seeing. The original third grade Hobart history curriculum was designed and written by Maran Webster. It has been revised twice with the most recent revision incorporating computer instruction.

We have also been busy with research. This spring we helped Centier Bank select pictures for a local history display at their Hobart branch. Do stop in and see it. We also helped select brickyard pictures for a local contractor who is building homes on the Natco site. We have also been working with Ken Schoon, a professor at IUN, who is writing a geological and historical history of the area.

Spring meant spring cleaning—the first in many years and sorely needed because of the dust and paint chip fallout from the ceiling painting. Rita McBride, Virginia Curtis, Elin Christianson, and Don Stewart, scrubbed and vacuumed and rearranged in time for the spring school tours. Over the summer Rita, Elin and Bob Green reorganized the George Earle – Old Mill area. While we still have a way to go, we think the Museum is looking better than ever.

Hoof and Mouth Disease

Last spring's outbreak of hoof and mouth disease in England jogged our memory and sent us back in the *Gazette* files to read about the 1914 epidemic of the dread disease in this area.

According to U. S. Dept. of Agriculture reports at the time, the 1914 outbreak was the first widespread epidemic in the nation's history. Fourteen states were quarantined by the U.S. government: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa and Kentucky.

The local outbreak was reported by the Lake County Agent in late November. Hoof and mouth disease was found in Lake County at herds on the August Carlson farm, the Feiler farm west of Merrillville, the Strickland farm at Lowell, and the Brown farm in Shelby. All were feeding locations for cattle shipped in from the Union Stockyards in Chicago. The County Agent identified this as the source of the outbreak.

Then, as now, the only practical method of control was to quarantine affected areas and to slaughter and destroy all cattle, sheep and swine on the affected farms. The quarantine was set in place immediately. A three-mile quarantine zone was placed around each infected farm. No livestock buyers or livestock movement was allowed within the quarantine.

In addition, hunting was banned in the county. The buying and selling of livestock was forbidden. There was to be no movement of hay, fodder or straw. Grain could not be taken to the Hobart mill for processing. The Gary wholesale market was closed, although it reopened shortly for produce. Finally, only pasteurized milk could be shipped by the many dairy farms in the area.

The second step was to destroy the infected herds. Specialized killing, burial and disinfecting teams were brought to the affected farms under the direction of the County Agent.

Within three weeks, the County Agent was able to report no new infections. He credited observance of the quarantine restrictions, which were lifted except for milk, which still had to be pasteurized. Although milk producers complained, the Agent said, in effect, that pasteurized milk was here—get used to it.

With only a few farms infected, Lake and Porter counties got off easy. Over 200 infected hers had to be destroyed in St. Joseph and LaPorte counties and Berrien County, Michigan.

In his final report in late December, the County Agent reported that the disease made its first appearance in the U.S. October 10. Between that time and December, just over $2 million in cattle, swine, sheep and goats were destroyed at a cost of $1.5 million. An equal sum was incurred by the states in which the epidemic occurred; with the federal government and the state each paying 50% of appraised value. Total losses in Indiana were $167,553 in livestock and $170,000 in eradication costs.

One Hundred Years Ago: 1901

Hobart celebrated a new year and a new century with a "Double Century" dance New Year's night. The Canada Cornet Band provided the music.

Meanwhile, the Trelegan Stock Co. enlivened the winter season with a two-week stand at the Odd Fellows Hall. The playbill included Uncle Josh Whitcomb," "Old Glory or Yankee Pluck vs. Spanish Treachery," "Lady Audley's Secret" and "Ten Nights in a Bar-room."

Hobart abounded in fraternal organizations. Men could join the Masons, Odd Fellows, Foresters, Maccabees, Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), Knights of Pythias, or the Modern Woodmen of America. For women, there were the Order of the Eastern Star, Rebekahs, or Lady Maccabees.

Churches thrived, too. Hobart boasted Congregational, Unitarian, Methodist Episcopal, St. Bridget's Catholic, Swedish and German Methodist and German (now Trinity) and Swedish (now Augustana) Lutheran Churches. St. Bridget's and the German Methodist and Lutheran Churches held services in German; the Swedish Methodist and Lutheran, in Swedish.

Businessmen organized the Hobart Commercial Association. The group's first project was to raise $2000 to bring the Quaker Canning & Preserving Co. to Hobart from Crocker. The cannery would be located on south Main Street at the "J" tracks (now the site of Hobart Lumber Co.'s store). The company was expected to provide between 35 and 75 seasonal jobs, a payroll of $4 - $5000 and would purchase $5 to $7000 worth of tomatoes and other produce from local farmers.

The town lost one of its leading citizens in January with the passing of W.B. Owen. Owen bought the Hinchcliff brickyard in 1886 and began to experiment with terra cotta lumber. He gradually expanded terra cotta production to Denver, Colorado and Wickcliffe, Ohio, before selling out to National Fireproofing. Owen was the first president of the town board when Hobart became a town and served as a trustee for 11 years.

Hobart also noted the passing of two U.S. presidents in 1901. Former president Benjamin Harrison died at his home in Indianapolis on March 13. William McKinley, the sitting president who was shot by an anarchist, died September 14. At McKinley's death, businesses closed, the Odd Fellows held a service and Hobart's bells joined others across the nation in tolling for five minutes at 2:30 p.m.

1901 was a local election year for town officials who were changing from one- to two-year terms. The burning issue was management of the municipal light and water plant, which was suffering from indebtedness, rusty water tanks, an overtaxed dynamo, and an inadequate water supply. (Water for the town was drawn from 40 shallow wells.) It is interesting to note that electricity was available only after dark. There was a movement afoot to provide electricity for morning lighting as the days grew shorter.
The outcome of the election, held in May, found Ed J. Neuman, John Hillman and William Scharbach elected town trustees; C.W. Coppins, clerk. (The *Gazette* noted that the clerk's only salary was what he earned from fees.) Gust Busse was elected town marshal; Fred Rose, Sr., was elected fire chief, and Alwin Wild, assistant chief.

In May Hobart Township High School graduated a class of seven. Both the high school and 8th grade commencements were held at the Unitarian Church. Ad admission fee of 25¢ for adults and 15¢ for children was charged.

Two Memorial Day observances were held. The GAR parade in the morning included the band, GAR members, citizens, school children, and young ladies carrying wreaths to the cemetery where graves were decorated. The procession marched back to Odd Fellows Hall for a program. The Foresters marched to the cemetery and decorated in the afternoon.

As summer began, the Hobart City Band, successor to the Canada Cornet Band, started to hold summer concerts. Silence reigned, however, on July 4th with no festivities. The *Gazette* commented that it was the first quiet 4th in over 30 years. Only a few businesses and dwellings were decorated, and the streets, after the milk shippers left in the morning, were almost deserted.

Property taxes were announced: 20¢ per $100 valuation.

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Hobart Historical Society, Inc.
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Annual Dinner: Thursday, November 15
Hobart Historical Society Museum
706 East Fourth Street, Hobart
(219) 942-0970
Open Every Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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TO: Bob Green, Treasurer
Hobart Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 24
Hobart, IN 46342-0024

Here is my annual contribution of $_____ to help preserve the past, present and future of Hobart History. (Contributions are tax-deductible.)

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